

Divorce: A Christian Perspective

Why does God allow divorce?

1. Hardness of people's hearts
2. This is not God's plan; He intends marriage to last a lifetime
3. God never commands divorce
4. God allows divorce because some people cannot forgive an immoral spouse and others will not change their immoral ways

What does "divorce" mean?

Biblical words for divorce mean...

1. To cut
2. To drive away or cast out
3. To separate

Legal grounds for divorce

1. Old Testament
 - a. Lack of virginity (Deut. 22)
 - b. Indecency (literally nudity which implies sexual impurity) (Deut. 24)
2. New Testament
 - a. Sexual immorality (Matt. 5 & 19)
 - b. Desertion (1 Cor. 7)
3. There are no statements to support other reasons!

Basic causes of divorce

1. Mankind's basic desire to be god and have absolute control
2. An inability/unwillingness to accept differences between the sexes
3. An inability/unwillingness to forgive

Why does God limit divorce? (since we are sinful and imperfect)

1. Without God's limits, we probably would not limit ourselves.
2. God's word says that marriage is a picture of His relationship with the church and when we choose not to abide by his standards we tarnish his reputation

Is remarriage permissible?

1. When the innocent spouse divorces because of sexual immorality by the other spouse.
2. When a believing spouse has been deserted by an unbelieving spouse.
3. What about Christians who divorce without biblical justification?
 - a. Some say they can never remarry. (This view seems to make the sin unforgiveable.)
 - b. Some say they can remarry if (and when) their ex-spouse remarries.
 - c. Some say they can remarry if they are truly repentant.

How should the church deal with divorce?

1. Divorce is not the unforgiveable sin!
2. There is no problem when biblical standards apply
3. People divorced for reasons other than biblically sanctioned ones should not hold leadership positions. (This is controversial in some places.)

Should people be treated differently based on the reasons for divorce?

1. Those who are "innocent" of wrongdoing should not face additional consequences.

2. Those who have sinned should face church discipline just like others who sin (Matthew 18).

How is society affected?

1. Individuals
 - a. No one is left unscarred.
 - b. Many people lose a sense of self-worth and confidence.
 - c. Many become angry at others and even at God (for not saving their marriage).
2. Families
 - a. Many single-parent families live at or below poverty level after divorce
 - b. Many children are forced (explicitly or implicitly) to choose sides between their parents.
 - c. Children receive conflicting messages about rules, values, morals, etc.
3. The Church
 - a. It causes conflict because not everyone treats the issue the same way.
 - b. It brings disrespect from many outside the church.
 - c. It causes people to be labeled as "hypocrites."

Society's effect on Christians

1. The average Christian does not view divorce any differently than non-Christians
2. Many view it as an easy, painless solution to a difficult situation.
3. With divorce so common, many churches do not deal with its sinful side
4. Many cheapen God's grace by going ahead with sin because He is a "God who forgives." They forget that God disciplines those he loves (Hebrews 12:6-12).

This issue must be faced

1. All churches are affected by divorce
2. The world encourages the idea that divorce is an easy solution to a "bad" situation.
3. The church needs to help couples...
 - a. Prepare for marriage
 - b. Maintain healthy marriages